



Reno



6 0 2

Chapter 1 by Haley

Reality, is a two part deal. You get the good with the bad and some don't get a good run at all. I feel like one of those people. The type where karma never bites me in the ass because the good I do never seems to come back. Though, I'm not asking for it for it to. I'm just not a bad person and enjoy making people happy if they've earned it. That would be like praying to God, not to praise him, but to get something in return just because you were a good and faithful Christian. That's selfish and asking to be damned in the end. Personally, I'd rather lived 80 years in evils of this world than eternity in hell.

So, what made me so blessed to be in a living hell I will probably never know. Through all the scars and pain it won't change the silver lined horizon I follow in the dark. If no good will come to me I will be the good for myself. Somebody's gotta do it, who better than me. What's made me so bitterly sweetly positive is the last few years. Got to face the world on my own a little earlier than most get the pleasure to or ever do. Old mindset set on quickly when I've lived through things I shouldn't have. I wonder, is this actually a living hell, or am I no longer living at all.

It's cold and wet in the middle of January, though you'd expect I'm referring to New England or

the mountains somewhere, no. It is desert all around and besides the city of Reno, there's nowhere outside to really go. Not now that I am in love and at seventeen out on my own. In the heart of the desert on the west side of Reno not too far away from the biggest little city isn't that big to me considering living my life up till now in Las Vegas where I was born and raised.

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Mom dealt blackjack, and my dad was the general manager of quite a few casinos on the strip over the years growing up. Showgirls were the women I looked up to. For god sake sometimes they even babysat me while my mom worked. Probably not the best of role models but they were gorgeous and out of this world. Being able to wear a headdress of ostrich feathers in barely a bikini with the rest of them covered colored glitter and sequins. They practically blind you if a stage light hits them the right way.

Almost to adulthood those eye catching women stuck with me and evolved my vision of beauty in an oddball way. At this point I think I have around thirty piercings. I don't mean in my ears either. My face is a metal smith's dream. Anyway, he still loves me through all this surgical steel inside and out. He bought me the plane ticket a few months back without ever actually meeting me. The point I'm getting at is he wasn't a psycho murderer, rapist luring girls to his dungeon from the internet. We've been together, physically present and together a couple weeks now. So far he doesn't seem to crazy, I'm the one who looks crazy between the two of us.

It is pretty early considering I am up before noon. So this is what 6am feels like. It wasn't done purposely cause I usually get up long after he leaves for work at 8. I assume from the nyquil I drank like a cocktail before bed. Still slept like shit. So half asleep yet so vividly dreamed.

I saw him there, lying still on the living room floor. That's all I saw cause the lights wouldn't work and the power shut off. Must have been the storm outside that did it. Lightning flashed as I passed a window and towards him.

"John, wake up.... John. " That is all I could say before a shadow distracted me. Not like the shadows from the lightning. The couch is black but now it looks impossibly blacker than it did when I walked in. I'm on my knees at his side. I should be finding help for him but I can't help but stare at the couch. Why am I staring at a piece of furniture so intent, and with my heart racing out of not fear for John anymore... A fear I have never felt before. Like something watching me from the dark but more than just a bump in the night childhood nightmare under the bed.

Definitely not under the bed,

One hand on the ground over his limp body towards it I crawl. Then the other hand follows. Like an animal protecting it's young I am over him on all fours. My answer as to why came to my realization very quickly but felt like forever paralyzed in fear. A sound like a whip cracking made

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He, she, or it is blacker than the shadow it came from, the eyes are too. Teeth of an angler fish like prison bars protruding out his mouth like no mouth was there. Just jaws clenching together the sharpest, bone white teeth outstretched beyond the chin and cheek to cheek. Mimicking my posture over the lifeless lying body of John on the floor it contorted up to me. Jaw dropped, not of mine, of this thing. Screeching with anger and grabbing at what it wanted, and who I was protecting with my body. It gets louder, angrier, and digs the claws into what it was after. Right into John's head the nails pierce into like warm butter. I won't budge even knowing this thing just took away his life with one hand like it was nothing. Instead I too make it known I'm no longer scared and I want what I want a lot harder.

"Fuck you! Get off of him!", yelling with my face so close our teeth could almost touch. It just stared like it never heard me. Another distraction took away the focus from the standoff. This time a silver reflection after a strike of lightning I didn't notice though it has been in between the blackness coming from the couch that first hypnotized me and where I had been next to John. The table, how perfectly placed just in reach right on the coffee table. What I lunge over towards and in my left hand grip is the equilizer to even the fight. Sharp like the teeth a pair of shears long and clean. I hold tight now with both hands closed shut like a dagger.

"I said get the fuck away!!!", are the last words I use in this fight. Words can't save me and didn't help him. With no hesitation and with maximum force I drive it this pair of shears straight into the same spot it's nails had speared into John's head. I'm no killer but I'm hungry for revenge. Black blood dripped out along with it's painful scream. "How does it feel motherfucker", I say loudly, almost proudly like this had somehow been a victory. One life lost is no victory but with it's retreat I felt like it was a win at least for me. It's gone and I'm now left standing with my weapon in hand I had held onto after it pulled away into nothingness. I would have pulled it out myself and stabbed it harder the next time if it hadn't disappeared so quickly. On my feet still next to him. Chest stuck out like a sailor and then in that moment I remember feeling like I was hard as nails. Blood on my shears my proof of this being my victorious battle. I got a little too cocky, and this wasn't yet over. Seconds after being on my feet is not even how long it took to get that knocked into my thick head, Literally...

Wind knocked from my body like payback for my final words to the black demon. The ceiling is

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like,"Thank god, I'll just pass out in my own dream and go into a deeper sleep escaping to another dream away from this nightmare". Never been more scared, never been as wrong. Skin is tearing from my ribs by the giant fist holding me dangling. I finally look away from the mutilation my body is receiving and at what was doing this to me. "Be my queen. I'll let you taste fire!!!", is what I heard him say before I startled awake, but it wasn't the last thing it did to me. As this creatures finale word spewed from his mouth, so did fire. I was engulfed in flames. Tearing my skin off is nothing compared to burning alive, even if it wasn't really real. For the last time I stop breathing. Among his vomit of fire was the tongue after the final flames lit me. Straight down my esophagus wriggling as if playing foreplay with the insides of my stomach. The dream doesn't fade or turn to blackness. I wake up without skipping a bit between nightmare and reality. "Air, I can finally breathe air", a thought that came with true relief to put to rest what demons lurk in my night terror.

"What happened to you? Were you running in the olympics in your sleep or something!?" These words almost spooked me being so on edge already. I turn my head as if I desired whiplash. All I see is a smiling face full of amusement. Don't really know if that reassured me it was all over and brought me great comfort, or, just pissed me off a little after the worst experience ever... "It's not funny", replied involuntarily out of agitation of his ignorance of what I just endured when he probably dreamed of normal guy things like video games and naked chicks. "Wow, someone woke up on the wrong side of the bed. Tonight you can have my side! You'll be happier after you win your medal in the olympics next time. I know you didn't win in your dream cause youre pretty snappy right now.."

"John, I hope that is the most random bullshit that comes from your lips today", almost making me life from the idea that my lazy ass in his mind was running let alone an olympian, win or lose.... I crack a smile,"You're such a dork." Then shortly lived laughter comes to a halt out of my urge to tell him everything. He looked at me like my bags should be packed and this crazy lady should probably not live with him. Though I don't disagree about my dream being genuinely crazy and just a dream I felt slightly butt hurt he didn't realize I slept in pure terror. Contradicting feelings were soon acknowledge by him. "I'm sorry baby, and I know it must have been very scary. You're awake so let's have a good day like always and you don't dwell on something that

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course we can, and today will be just fine. Like it always is with you cause I love you." He looked satisfied, and returned my words of love. On second thought maybe I shouldn't talk about this again. Don't want to lose him because he finds out I am apparently sick in the head.

Months pass and I honestly no longer care about that night. Life is good, and for once I was truly happy day and night because of one man. What an impact on my life he was. Next thing I know he is writing me songs and breaking out in public embarrassing me till I'm red cause I do get weird when everyone stares, but I love him more. Everything bad faded in my life and born again I was in this world, in Reno. Life could never get any better than this I felt in my heart and soul. Then he proposed, and in that moment his left knee planted on the ground and ring in hand he sang me one final song before I said yes.

"You're a queen, can I be your king?
So please take this, diamond ring.
You're my fire, my everything.
You should belong to me,
Say yes or everyday I'll keep trying.
Hey, I'm gonna marry you someday."

Demons came back into my head again, singing right along with him. I was right. Things couldn't be any better for me.... ever again.

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